

For Immediate Release
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Public Health Department Increases Efforts to Reduce Long Term Care COVID-19 Spread

New Orders require direct care staff to work in one facility, transportation companies to use PPE

Port Washington, WI – This morning, Kirsten Johnson, Public Health Officer for Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department, issued a third order related to long term care facilities in Washington and Ozaukee Counties. The orders are intended to limit resident exposure.

The new orders require all staffing agencies or similar businesses, including hospice providers who provide direct care staff who work at long-term care facilities in Washington and Ozaukee Counties, to limit personnel from working in multiple facilities during this state of emergency. The order applies to every license at larger facilities.

In addition, the order requires any company transporting long-term care facility residents to utilize personal protective equipment (masks and gloves) and routinely disinfect and clean vehicles.

“COVID-19 has been detected in five long term care facilities in our jurisdiction,” said Johnson. “We suspect a half dozen more have unconfirmed cases. We know COVID-19 is especially dangerous for our aging population and we are doing everything we can to protect these vulnerable residents. I thank the facilities for working with us to implement these orders. We understand staffing and PPE shortages are universal and are working with facilities as best we can.”

Through shared resources, the Washington Ozaukee Public Health Department is conducting robust contact tracing for every positive case of COVID-19. Extensive contact tracing has produced evidence that staff and caregivers have introduced the virus into numerous long-term care facilities.

This morning, Washington County leaders spoke with Governor Evers to brief him on our concerns with long-term care COVID-19 spread.

Public health employees have been working with facilities and long-term-care trade associations on compliance with these orders.

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